

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An extendable and ~~contractable~~contractible steering column apparatus including an outer column through which an inner column is slidably inserted, a lock housing portion formed on the outer column, and a locking mechanism that includes a pair of movable pieces slidably fitted within a cylinder bore formed in the lock housing portion to shift said pair of movable pieces toward each other so as to press said inner column and to shift said pair of movable pieces away from each other so as to release the pressure on said inner column, in response to swinging of an operating lever, wherein ~~said locking mechanism~~ comprising:

said cylinder bore has a cross-section of a polygonal shape;

each of said pair of movable pieces has a cross-section of a polygonal shape corresponding to the polygonal shape cross-section of said cylinder bore;

a threaded screw hole is formed in a first ~~movable piece as one of~~ said pair of movable pieces;

a through-hole is formed in a second ~~movable piece as the other of~~ said pair of movable pieces; and

a screw rod is inserted through the through-hole of said second movable piece and is provided with a screw portion threaded in the threaded screw hole of said first movable piece and a head portion to be in contact with an end surface of said second movable piece and to which a base end portion of said operating lever is fixed.